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EIS000636

MS. VIERECK: Hello. My name is Jennifer Viereck, V-i-e-r-e-c-k.

I'm going to repeat my first four points from this morning for the benefit of the community, and then I'd like to talk about some other rail concerns that I have.

1 I think there's a number of inadequacies in this document. It's obvious that a lot of work went into it, but there are some real serious concerns, and [the] first one that I have is the language that is used, spent fuel. Spent fuel implies that the radioactivity is no longer present, that it's been used up in some manner, and I think that's highly misleading, and I think the DOE could do better with language. Irradiated fuel might be good.

As the fuel comes out of the nuclear reactor it is one million times more radioactive than when it goes in. So this does not indicate spent to me. ]

I have some legal concerns, legal conflicts that I think are very inadequately addressed and could be serious in the future of such a project. The first is the Treaty of Ruby Valley.

2 [The Treaty of Ruby Valley was acknowledged by the U.S. Government as giving sovereignty over this land to the Western Shoshone people, and I would hope that my government would keep its word. There is a proposal to withdraw 230 square miles for this project. Why that's so large, I do not know.

In addition to this quarter mile rail right-of-way that we're talking about. Every inch of this mileage line is within Western Shoshone territory. So I would hope that the final EIS addresses that a lot more seriously than the draft document does. ]

3 [I'm also concerned about legal conflicts with the State of Nevada, the issue of transporting high level waste into a state that has outlawed that, and I'm really concerned about the issue of water pollution, which is a felony in the State of Nevada. ]

4 [I have some legal concerns about the use of the National Environmental Policy Act in this instance. I want to really make it clear that as I read this, it is not to be used to try to railroad, and I'm not trying to make a pun, a political decision or an existing decision through by using this law, but this project needs to be really carefully evaluated with this law and not just pushed on through. The project appears to me and to many that I'm listening to tonight to be based on some pretty bad science, and I'm really concerned about that. ]

The original mission of the Yucca Mountain repository was to contain and isolate high level

nuclear waste from the environment, and it's very clear from this draft document that the DOE no longer feels able to do that. So why are we proceeding in this manner?

This is a very serious concern to me. It is pretty clear that given the overall lifespan of the nuclear materials in question, the project would barely slow down the spread of radionuclides.

5 [As far as general railroad transportation is concerned, not just spur that we're talking about which of the five it would be, but general railroad transportation around the United States, I have some real concerns there. I have done some very preliminary research, but I was pretty alarmed by what I found.

As this material travels on general railroads, whether it's attached to a commercial train or whether it's on a dedicated train, it's still going to be going through a whole lot of track and through 43 different states. I found that 80 percent of rail crossings in the United States do not have signals. I found that you are 30 times more likely to be hit by a train than another automobile. That's the rate of accidents in this country. And they are rising.

That there is a rail accident somewhere in the United States every 90 minutes, and this figure has continued to increase over the last several years. And that there is a toxic spill every two weeks.

I have really serious concerns about these statistics continuing to be in place with casks of nuclear materials attached to each of these accidents and problems.

And I am extremely concerned about the delay that these things could cause to nuclear casks that would be attached to such trains, that they would sit in areas where they would continue to emit radiation. I don't find any of these items addressed in the document, and so that's why I'm concerned about inadequacies.]

6 [I would hope that the final document would have a great deal more information about rail transportation in the U.S. or that an additional EIS or at the very least a supplement would be put forward, because I don't see how anybody can make educated decisions without this kind of information.

As far as this specific spur, whether it is here or any of the other four routes, I'm really concerned by the lack of information and how one could possibly make a decision about either method of transportation or route given what's there.

There is, as other people have mentioned, a real inadequate amount of information on the issue of fencing and how that would affect farms, ranchers, migration patterns, grazing and other local access on hundreds of small county roads that go through the area that this rail would continue to pass through.

There seems to be inadequate information about materials and construction methods and

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There's very little information about signaling and how that would be used.

There is very little information about accidents along the tracks, and I mean things like floods, animals on the tracks, these kinds of things, how that would be addressed in terms of delaying rail cars indefinitely, perhaps next to Jamie's house.

And there seems to be inadequate information about the issue of ownership and maintenance.

I personally live near the test site, and I live near Yucca Mountain. So while you are concerned about how many trains are going to go past your house, I live where they are all going to arrive and remain for the end of time.

So I'm very concerned, and I'm very concerned about DOE's past record for accidents, cleanup, maintenance and that kind of thing, because where I live during the winter months -- during the summer months I understand they mainly come down through Ely and that area. When Ely starts to snow up, the nuke low level waste that is going into the nuclear test site comes within two and-a-half miles of my home up from the south from Baker, between five and 15 trucks a week. These trucks are all to clean up other DOE sites where those people were told that there wouldn't be a problem.

So you can understand that I have a certain amount of concern in listening to these statistics.

7 [My final point is that I would really like to see a much more reasonable approach in the document for the no action alternative. I think both proposals that are in this are fairly ridiculous, and they are quite misleading when one tries to compare the rest of the project to the no action alternatives.]

I have spoken to a number of people privately who work at the Yucca Mountain site in a variety of capacities. At this time most of the people that I have spoken with feel strongly that it's a bad idea.

And I just want to share with all of you that they are being able to go home with their paycheck and feel reasonably good about that because they are counting on us to stop this project so it doesn't go through. Thank you very much.

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